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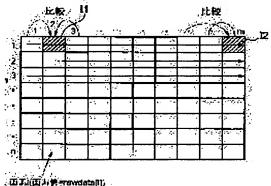
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(54) METHOD FOR DETECTING DEFECTIVE PIXEL IN IMAGING DEVICE

(57)Abstract:

PROBLEM TO BE SOLVED: To provide a method for detecting a defective pixel in an imaging device by which an image with uniform lightness is photographed with the imaging device being a detection object of a defective pixel so as to detect the defective pixel from an output value in the unit of pixels obtained through the photographing and the defective pixel is exactly detected by taking the reduction in surrounding luminous quantity that is inevitable in the characteristic of an optical lens into account. SOLUTION: An output value of an optional pixel I1 is compared with each of output values of two corresponding pixels adjacent to the pixel I1 so as to detect a defective pixel depending on whether or not the comparison result is within a prescribed range.



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CLAIMS

[Claim(s)]

[Claim 1] The defective pixel detection approach of the image sensor characterized by to perform defective pixel detection by comparing with the output value of two or more correspondence pixels which are the defective pixel detection approaches of an image sensor of detecting a defective pixel from the output value of each pixel unit which photos the image of uniform brightness with the image sensor set as the detection object of a defective pixel, and is acquired by the photography, and approach the pixel to the output value of the pixel of arbitration.

[Claim 2] The defective pixel detection approach of the image sensor according to claim 1 characterized by performing defective pixel detection by comparing with the output value of two or more correspondence pixels in the same area which divides the image pick-up side of the image sensor concerned into two or more area with the amount property of ambient light of the optical lens used for an image sensor, and approaches the pixel to the output value of the pixel of arbitration, and the average in the same area.

[Claim 3] The above-mentioned image sensor is the defective pixel detection approach of the image sensor according to claim 1 or 2 characterized by performing defective pixel detection by comparing with the output value of two or more approaching correspondence pixels which form a color filter in one and serve as the same color component as the pixel to the output value of the pixel of arbitration.

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DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[Detailed Description of the Invention] [0001]

[Field of the Invention] This invention relates to the defective pixel detection approach of the image sensor of **, such as CCD currently used for example, with the digital still / video camera.
[0002]

[Description of the Prior Art] It was not independently scrupulous, and in the digital camera with the need for the still camera which photos a still picture, and the video camera which photos an animation of recording a photography image as an electrical signal, image formation of the light figure acquired by the optical lens system was carried out to the image pick-up side of image sensors, such as CCD (Charge Coupled Device: charge-coupled device) and a CMOS area sensor, photo electric conversion of the luminous intensity was carried out for every pixel of a large number formed in the image pick-up side, and it has taken out as an electrical signal.

[0003] The pixel which has big deflection to which the electrical signal outputted for every pixel to the incidence of the light of brightness with the same image sensor used with this kind of digital camera exceeds the threshold to which it must gather to some extent and the output value is beforehand set as compared with other pixels is judged to be a defect.

[0004] As an approach of detecting the pixel defect of such an image sensor, conventionally, the photographic subject which has uniform brightness all over a field angle is photoed, and the average of the pixel value of the whole screen is calculated. And that to which a certain threshold is established and the deflection from an average makes a larger pixel than a threshold a defective pixel was common.

[0005]

[Problem(s) to be Solved by the Invention] However, it has the problem from which the quantity of light of a screen periphery falls as compared with the quantity of light of middle of the screen as a property remarkable in an optical lens system especially with a short focal distance, and unescapable and which is called the so-called shading, and even if a photographic subject has uniform brightness, incidence is not carried out with the uniform quantity of light all over the image pick-up side of an image sensor.

[0006] Therefore, after asking for the average of the pixel value of the whole screen like before, by approach which measures each pixel, there was fault that detection of an exact defective pixel -- the pixel which is neither the case where a defective pixel is undetectable, nor a defect can be accidentally detected as a defective pixel -- could not be performed.

[0007] This invention was made in view of the above actual condition, and the place made into the purpose is to offer the defective pixel detection approach of the image sensor which can detect the pixel which has produced the defect correctly in consideration of the fall of the unescapable amount of ambient light in the property of an optical lens.

[0008]

[Means for Solving the Problem] Invention according to claim 1 is the defective pixel detection approach of an image sensor of detecting a defective pixel from the output value of each pixel unit which photos the image of uniform brightness with the image sensor set as the detection object of a defective pixel, and is acquired by the photography, and is characterized by performing defective pixel detection by comparing with the output value of two or more correspondence pixels close to the pixel to the output value of the pixel of arbitration.

[0009] It becomes possible to detect a defective pixel correctly also in consideration of the fall of the amount of

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ambient light by comparing the output value of such an approach, then the pixel of arbitration with the output value of two or more correspondence pixels close to the pixel.

[0010] In invention of the claim 1 above-mentioned publication, invention according to claim 2 divides the image pick-up side of the image sensor concerned into two or more area with the amount property of ambient light of the optical lens used for an image sensor, and is characterized by performing defective pixel detection by comparing with the output value of two or more correspondence pixels in the same area close to the pixel, and the average in the same area to the output value of the pixel of arbitration.

[0011] It adds to an operation of invention of such an approach, then the claim 1 above-mentioned publication. Since it was made to measure the pixel of arbitration with the output value of two or more correspondence pixels in the same area close to the pixel, and the average in the same area for two or more area of every which took into consideration the center/circumference of a screen, and divided the image pick-up side of an image sensor By performing optimal area division according to the property of an optical lens system, the capacity of a comparison operation needed, it becomes possible to detect a defective pixel to accuracy more.

[0012] In invention above-mentioned claim 1 or given in two, the above-mentioned image sensor forms a color filter in one, and invention according to claim 3 is characterized by performing defective pixel detection by comparing with the output value of two or more approaching correspondence pixels used as the same color component as the pixel to the output value of the pixel of arbitration.

[0013] Even if it is the image sensor which formed the color filter in one in addition to the operation of invention such an approach then above-mentioned claim 1, or given in two, in order to detect a defective pixel for every same color component, it becomes possible to detect a defective pixel more correctly. [0014]

[Embodiment of the Invention] With reference to a drawing, one gestalt of operation of this invention is explained below.

[0015] First, the fundamental concept which starts the gestalt of this operation by <u>drawing 1</u> is explained. [0016] The image data of one sheet which this drawing photos the screen of uniform brightness, such as a viewer, and is obtained from an image sensor shall be shown, and this image data shall consist of m dots wide and n dots (both m and n are the natural number) long pixel values.

[0017] In the line j of arbitration (1 <=j<=n), if the pixel value of eye i (1 <=i<=m) train is set to rawdata [i] from the head Except for the point (i= 1 or m) of both ends, as fundamentally shown in the pixel I1 in drawing, the pixel value per dot each which right and left adjoin is used (1). rawdata[i] >rawdata [i+1] xa (a is a threshold and 1 < a < 2)

And ****** [that rawdata[i] >rawdata[i-1] xa is materialized] (2) rawdata[i] <rawdata[i+1] xb (b is a threshold and 0< b<1)

And the comparison operation which becomes [whether rawdata[i] <rawdata[i-1] xb is materialized and] is performed.

[0018] However, since there is no pixel which adjoins left-hand side in being i= 1, into which [of the above (1) and (2)] formula, it replaces with rawdata [i-1], and rawdata [i+2] (=rawdata [3]) is used.

[0019] Since similarly there is no pixel which adjoins right-hand side in being i=m as shown in the pixel I2 in drawing, into which [of the above (1) and (2)] formula, it replaces with rawdata [i+1], and rawdata [i-2] is used.

[0020] When the above-mentioned (1) formula is materialized, the pixel i is judged at a case to be the so-called "white crack" which is too high compared with other pixels, and when the above-mentioned (2) formula is materialized on the contrary, the pixel i will be judged to be the so-called "black crack" which is too low compared with other pixels.

[0021] Decision of the pixel value rawdata about the above pixels i [i] is judged for every pixels of all that constitute image data by scan. In this case, the direction of a scan can perform now decision about all the pixels that constitute an image from advancing the pixel i of one line at a time to the right from the left horizontally, and advancing Rhine one by one downward from a top like the raster scan in a television picture.

[0022] <u>Drawing 2</u> shows the contents of the processing which detects the pixel defect, scanning sequentially each pixel value of the image data which consists of n dots by m dots as mentioned above.

[0023] In addition, the above (1) and (2) types are premised on two or more pixel defects not occurring continuously horizontally.

[0024] Thus, it judged whether each pixel is a defect or there would be nothing by the comparison of the pixel which adjoins right and left, and a pixel value. Therefore, since the pixel value acquired if it is between the adjoining pixels must be almost comparable and a different pixel value exceeding a threshold thinks [according to a pixel defect] that it is a thing mostly and is infallible even if it is the case where the center section of the screen and a periphery change in the quantity of light remarkably with effects of an optical lens system, detection of a defective pixel can be performed very correctly as a result.

[0025] In addition, although the above-mentioned explanation explained the case so that a pixel value may be compared to one pixel of arbitration using every one each a total of two pixels which adjoined or approached the right and left Not only this but using every one each a total of two pixels of the which adjoined or approached up and down, and making it the business which compares a pixel value using every one each a total of four pixels which adjoined or approached further vertically and horizontally to one pixel of arbitration, is considered.

[0026] In addition, the explanation using <u>drawing 1</u> and <u>drawing 2</u> which were mentioned above shows the fundamental concept, and since it carries out mostly at a color filter and one and is constituted except for the image sensor for a part of monochrome image photography, it is meaningless [an image sensor] even if an actual image sensor compares the pixel and pixel value which adjoin the pixel and from which a color component differs to the pixel of arbitration.

[0027] Then, the image sensor which constituted in one the color filter of the primary color system (RGB) of the BEIYA array which is a typical color component array by <u>drawing 3</u> is explained.

[0028] the vertical angle which drawing 3 (1) arranges 2 pixels G (green) nearest to a brightness component on a vertical angle among each color component of RGB by making 2 pixels long and 2 pixels wide a total of 4 pixels into one unit so that the contents of an array of the color filter of a primary color system BEIYA array may be shown and it may illustrate, and remains and which faces -- R (red) and B (blue) -- it arranges each by 1 pixel.

[0029] The image data which the image sensor which constituted the color filter of such a primary color system BEIYA array in one outputs comes to be shown in <u>drawing 3</u> (2), and the contiguity pixel which has the same color component to the pixel of arbitration is located next to [in which right and left opened one pixel at a time, respectively] two.

[0030] Therefore, if this image data shall consist of m dots wide and n dots (both m and n are the natural number) long pixel values like above-mentioned <u>drawing 1</u> In the line j of arbitration (1 <=j<=n), if the pixel value of eye i (1 <=i<=m) train is set to rawdata [i] from the head Except for the point (i= 1 or m) of both ends, as fundamentally shown in the pixel I3 in drawing, the pixel value per dot each of the same color component which one right and left end and adjoins is used (3). rawdata[i] >rawdata [i+2] xa (a is a threshold and 1 < a < 2) And ****** [that rawdata[i] >rawdata[i-2] xa is materialized] (4) rawdata[i] <rawdata [i+2] xb (b is a threshold and 0 < b < 1)

And the comparison operation which becomes [whether rawdata[i] <rawdata[i-2] xb is materialized and] is performed.

[0031] however, i= -- since there is no pixel of the same color component which opens in left-hand side one and adjoins it in being 1 or 2, into which [of the above (3) and (4)] formula, it replaces with rawdata [i-2], and rawdata [i+4] is used.

[0032] Since similarly there is no pixel of the same color component which opens in right-hand side one and adjoins it in being i=m or m-1 as shown in the pixel I4 in drawing, into which [of the above (3) and (4)] formula, it replaces with rawdata [i+2], and rawdata [i-4] is used.

[0033] When the above-mentioned (3) formula is materialized, the pixel i is judged at a case to be the so-called "white crack" which is too high compared with other pixels, and when the above-mentioned (4) formula is materialized on the contrary, the pixel i will be judged to be the so-called "black crack" which is too low compared with other pixels.

[0034] The pixel which has produced the defect of an image sensor is certainly detectable by performing decision about all the pixels that judge for every pixels of all and constitute an image which constitutes image data for decision of the pixel value rawdata about the above pixels i [i] by scan.

[0035] Next, the modification of the gestalt of this operation is explained.

[0036] Drawing 4 (1) shows the condition of having divided equally into block of a total of 16 beside [4]

vertical 4x the image pick-up side of the image sensor which constituted the color filter of a primary color system BEIYA array in one, is up to these the blocks of each divided into 16 also in image data, and computes the average for every color component beforehand.

[0037] <u>Drawing 4</u> (2) shows one of the area of the plurality of the image data divided as above-mentioned drawing 4 (1) showed, and the contiguity pixel which has the same color component to the pixel of arbitration in the area concerned is located next to [in which right and left opened one pixel at a time, respectively] two. [0038] Therefore, the image data in this p-th block area (1<=p<=16) shall consist of m dots wide and n dots (both m and n are the natural number) long pixel values, and it sets in the line j of arbitration (1 <=j<=n). If the pixel value of eye i (1 <=i<=m) train is set to rawdata [i] from the head Except for the point (i= 1 or m) of both ends, as fundamentally shown in the pixel I5 in drawing One right and left end and the pixel value per dot each of the adjoining same color component is used (5). rawdata [i] >average(p, R) xc and rawdata[i] >rawdata[i+2] xa (a is a threshold and 1< a<2)

- ** or a ****** [that rawdata[i] >rawdata[i-2] xa is materialized] (however, average (p, R): average of the total pixel value of the color component R in the block area p concerned corresponding to the color component R of Pixel i.) c: A threshold, 1 < c < 2
- (6) rawdata [i] <average(p, R) xd and rawdata[i] <rawdata[i+2] xb (b is a threshold and 0< b<1)

The comparison operation which becomes [** or / whether rawdata[i] <rawdata[i-2] xb is materialized and] is performed (when the color component of Pixel i is G or B, it replaces with Above average (p, R), and average (p, G) or average (p, B) is used).

[0039] however, i= -- since there is no pixel of the same color component which opens in the left-hand side in the block area concerned one, and adjoins it in being 1 or 2, into which [of the above (5) and (6)] formula, it replaces with rawdata [i-2], and rawdata [i+4] is used.

[0040] Since similarly there is no pixel of the same color component which opens in the right-hand side in the block area concerned one, and adjoins it in being i=m or m-1, into which [of the above (5) and (6)] formula, it replaces with rawdata [i+2], and rawdata [i-4] is used.

[0041] When the above-mentioned (5) formula is materialized, the pixel i is judged at a case to be the so-called "white crack" which is too high compared with other pixels, and when the above-mentioned (6) formula is materialized on the contrary, the pixel i will be judged to be the so-called "black crack" which is too low compared with other pixels.

[0042] It is the thing which constitutes the image data in the block area which divided decision of the pixel value rawdata about the above pixels i [i] by scan and to judge for every pixels of all. Since it was made to measure the pixel of arbitration with the pixel value of two or more correspondence pixels of the same color component in the same area which adjoins the pixel and approaches for two or more area of every which took into consideration the center/circumference of a screen, and divided the image pick-up side of an image sensor, it becomes possible to detect a defective pixel more correctly.

[0043] In addition, although illustrated in above-mentioned <u>drawing 4</u> about the case where the image pick-up side of an image sensor is equally divided into block of a total of 16 beside [4] vertical 4x This invention is good also as what only divides an image into two area, a center section and the periphery of a screen, as shown, for example in <u>drawing 5</u> (1), without restricting to this, and Or as shown in <u>drawing 5</u> (2), are good for block of a total of nine beside [3] vertical 3x also as what is divided equally. The more nearly optimal result can be obtained by performing area division according to the property of an optical lens system, the capacity of a comparison operation needed -- the square from which the said alignment-[middle of the screen] magnitude differs as furthermore shown in <u>drawing 5</u> (3) divides into four area.

[0044] In addition, let this invention be what has possible deforming variously and carrying out within limits which do not deviate not only from the gestalt of the above-mentioned implementation but from its summary. [0045] Furthermore, invention of various phases is included in the gestalt of the above-mentioned implementation, and various invention may be extracted by the proper combination in two or more requirements for a configuration indicated. For example, even if some requirements for a configuration are deleted from all the requirements for a configuration shown in the gestalt of operation, at least one of the technical problems stated in the column of Object of the Invention is solvable, and when at least one of the effectiveness stated in the column of an effect of the invention is obtained, the configuration from which this requirement for a configuration was deleted may be extracted as invention.

[0046]

[Effect of the Invention] According to invention according to claim 1, it becomes possible to detect a defective pixel correctly also in consideration of the fall of the amount of ambient light by comparing the output value of the pixel of arbitration with the output value of two or more correspondence pixels close to the pixel. [0047] According to invention according to claim 2, it adds to the effect of the invention of the claim 1 above-mentioned publication. Since it was made to measure the pixel of arbitration with the output value of two or more correspondence pixels in the same area close to the pixel for two or more area of every which took into consideration the center/circumference of a screen, and divided the image pick-up side of an image sensor By performing optimal area division according to the property of an optical lens system, the capacity of a comparison operation needed, it becomes possible to detect a defective pixel to accuracy more. [0048] Even if it is the image sensor which formed the color filter in one in addition to the effect of the invention above-mentioned claim 1 or given in two, in order to detect a defective pixel for every same color component according to invention according to claim 3, it becomes possible to detect a defective pixel more correctly.

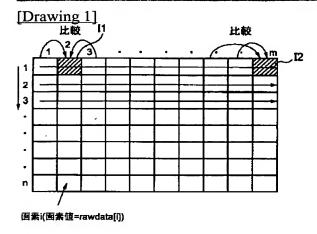
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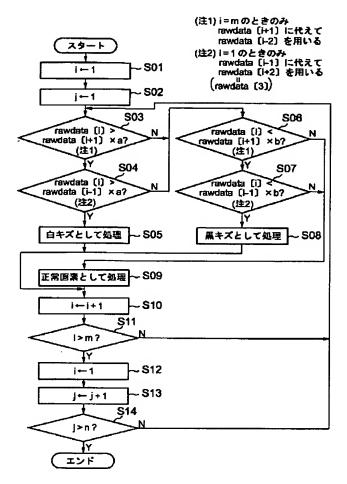
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DRAWINGS

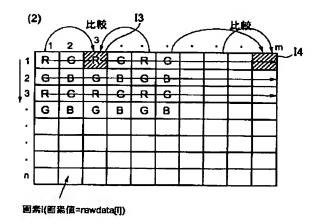


[Drawing 2]



[Drawing 3]

R	G	R	G
G	В	O	В
R	G	R	G
G	В	G	, B



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[Drawing 4] 1プロックで 色ごとに平均値 を計算 (2) 平均値(Jブロック・R) G 画来i(画素值=rawdata[i]) [Drawing 5] (1) (2) (3)

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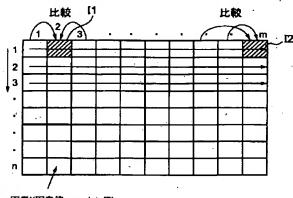
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(54) 【発明の名称】 撮像素子の欠陥画素検出方法

(57)【要約】

【課題】欠陥画素の検出対象となる撮像素子にて一様な明るさの画像を撮影し、その撮影によって得られる各画素単位の出力値から欠陥画素を検出する撮像素子の欠陥画素検出方法であって、光学レンズの特性で不可避な周辺光量の低下を考慮して正確に欠陥を生じている画素を検出する。

【解決手段】任意の画素 I 1 の出力値に対し、その画素 I 1 に隣接する 2 つの対応画素の出力値と比較して所定 の範囲内にあるか否かで欠陥画素検出を行なう。



國素i(國素值=rawdata[i])

【特許請求の範囲】

【請求項1】欠陥画素の検出対象となる撮像素子にて一様な明るさの画像を撮影し、その撮影によって得られる各画素単位の出力値から欠陥画素を検出する撮像素子の欠陥画素検出方法であって、

任意の画素の出力値に対し、その画素に近接する複数の 対応画素の出力値と比較することで欠陥画素検出を行な うことを特徴とする撮像素子の欠陥画素検出方法。

【請求項2】撮像素子に使用される光学レンズの周辺光量特性により当該撮像素子の撮像面を複数のエリアに分割し、任意の画素の出力値に対し、その画素に近接する同一エリア内の複数の対応画素の出力値及び同一エリア内の平均値と比較することで欠陥画素検出を行なうことを特徴とする請求項1記載の撮像素子の欠陥画素検出方法

【請求項3】上記撮像素子はカラーフィルタを一体に形成し、任意の画素の出力値に対し、その画素と同一の色成分となる近接する複数の対応画素の出力値と比較することで欠陥画素検出を行なうことを特徴とする請求項1 または2記載の撮像素子の欠陥画素検出方法。

【発明の詳細な説明】

[0001]

【発明の属する技術分野】本発明は、例えばデジタルスチル/ビデオカメラで使用されているCCD等のの撮像素子の欠陥画素検出方法に関する。

[0002]

【従来の技術】静止画を撮影するスチルカメラと動画を 撮影するビデオカメラとの別に拘らず、撮影画像を電気 信号として記録する必要のあるデジタルカメラでは、光 学レンズ系で得た光像をCCD(Charge Cou pled Device:電荷結合素子)やCMOSエ リアセンサ等の撮像素子の撮像面に結像し、その撮像面 に形成された多数の画素毎に光の強度を光電変換し、電 気信号として取出している。

【0003】 この種のデジタルカメラで使用される撮像素子は、同一の明るさの光の入射に対して画素毎に出力する電気信号がある程度揃っていなければならず、他の画素に比して出力値が予め設定されている閾値を越えるような、大きな偏差を有する画素は欠陥と判断される。 【0004】 このような撮像素子の画素欠陥を検出する方法として、従来は、画角全面で一様な明るさを有する

方法として、従来は、画用全面で一様な明るさを有する 被写体を撮影し、画面全体の画素値の平均を計算する。 そして、ある閾値を設け、平均からの偏差が閾値よりも 大きい画素を欠陥画素とするものが一般的であった。

[0005]

【発明が解決しようとする課題】しかしながら、特に焦点距離の短い光学レンズ系に顕著で不可避な特性として、画面中央の光量に比して画面周辺部の光量が落ちてしまう、所謂シェーディングと呼称される問題を有しており、被写体が一様な明るさを有するものであったとし

ても、撮像素子の撮像面全面に一様な光量で入射される ものではない。

【0006】そのため、従来のように画面全体の画素値の平均を求めてから、各画素を比較するような方法では、欠陥画素が検出できない場合や欠陥ではない画素を欠陥画素として誤って検出してしまう場合があり得るなど、正確な欠陥画素の検出が行なえないという不具合があった。

【0007】本発明は上記のような実情に鑑みてなされたもので、その目的とするところは、光学レンズの特性で不可避な周辺光量の低下を考慮して正確に欠陥を生じている画素を検出することが可能な撮像素子の欠陥画素検出方法を提供することにある。

[0008]

【課題を解決するための手段】請求項1記載の発明は、 欠陥画素の検出対象となる撮像素子にて一様な明るさの 画像を撮影し、その撮影によって得られる各画素単位の 出力値から欠陥画素を検出する撮像素子の欠陥画素検出 方法であって、任意の画素の出力値に対し、その画素に 20 近接する複数の対応画素の出力値と比較することで欠陥 画素検出を行なうことを特徴とする。

【0009】とのような方法とすれば、任意の画素の出力値をその画素に近接する複数の対応画素の出力値と比較することで、周辺光量の低下をも考慮して正確に欠陥 画素を検出することが可能となる。

【0010】請求項2記載の発明は、上記請求項1記載の発明において、撮像素子に使用される光学レンズの周辺光量特性により当該撮像素子の撮像面を複数のエリアに分割し、任意の画素の出力値に対し、その画素に近接する同一エリア内の複数の対応画素の出力値及び同一エリア内の平均値と比較することで欠陥画素検出を行なうととを特徴とする。

【0011】このような方法とすれば、上記請求項1記載の発明の作用に加えて、撮像素子の撮像面を画面の中央/周辺を勘案して分割した複数のエリア毎に任意の画素をその画素に近接する同一エリア内の複数の対応画素の出力値及び同一エリア内の平均値と比較するようにしたので、光学レンズ系の特性や必要とされる比較演算の能力等に応じて最適なエリア分割を行なうことで、欠陥画素をより正確に検出することが可能となる。

【0012】請求項3記載の発明は、上記請求項1または2記載の発明において、上記撮像素子はカラーフィルタを一体に形成し、任意の画素の出力値に対し、その画素と同一の色成分となる近接する複数の対応画素の出力値と比較することで欠陥画素検出を行なうことを特徴とする。

【0013】とのような方法とすれば、上記請求項1または2記載の発明の作用に加えて、カラーフィルタを一体に形成した撮像素子であっても、同一の色成分毎に欠陥画素の検出を行なうようになるため、欠陥画素をより

2

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正確に検出することが可能となる。

[0014]

【発明の実施の形態】以下図面を参照して本発明の実施の一形態を説明する。

【0015】まず、図1により本実施の形態に係る基本的な概念について説明する。

【0016】同図は、ビューワなどの一様な輝度の画面を撮影して撮像素子から得られる1枚の画像データを示すもので、この画像データが横mドット×縦nドット(m、nは共に自然数)の画素値から構成されているものとする。

【0017】任意の行j($1 \le j \le n$)において、その 先頭からi($1 \le i \le m$)列目の画素値をr a w d a t a [i] とすると、両端の点(i=1 またはm)を除い て、基本的には図中の画素 I 1 に示す如く、左右の隣接 する各 I ドットずつの画素値を用いて

(1) rawdata[i]>rawdata[i+1]×a(aは 閾値、1<a<2)

且つ

rawdata [i] > rawdata [i-1] × a. が成立するか否か

(2) rawdata [i] < rawdata [i+1] × b (bは 関値、0 < b < 1)

且つ

rawdata [i] < rawdata [i - 1] × b が成立するか否か

なる比較演算を実行する。

【0018】但し、i=1である場合には、左側に隣接する画素がないため、上記(1), (2)のいずれの式中においてもrawdata[i-1]に代えてrawdata[i+2](=rawdata[3])を用いる。

【0020】上記(1)式が成立した場合には場合にはその画素iは他の画素に比べて輝度値が高すぎる、所謂「白キズ」と判断され、反対に上記(2)式が成立した場合にはその画素iは他の画素に比べて輝度値が低すぎる、所謂「黒キズ」と判断されることになる。

【0021】上記のような画素 i に関する画素値 r a w d a t a [i]の判断を走査により画像データを構成するすべての画素毎に判断していく。この場合、走査の方向は、例えばテレビジョン画像におけるラスタスキャンの如く、画素 i を水平方向に1ラインずつ、左から右に進めていき、且つラインを上から下へ順次進めていくことで、画像を構成するすべての画素についての判断を行なうことができるようになる。

【0022】図2は上記のようにして横mドット×縦nドットから構成される画像データの各画素値を順次走査しながら画素欠陥を検出していく処理の内容を示すものである。

【0023】なお、上記(1), (2)式は複数の画素 欠陥が水平方向に連続して発生しないことを前提として いる。

【0024】とのように、個々の画素が欠陥であるかないかを、左右に隣接する画素と画素値の比較により判断するようにした。そのため、光学レンズ系の影響により画面の中央部と周辺部とで著しく光量が異なる場合であっても、隣接する画素間であれば得られるであろう画素値はほぼ同程度である筈であり、閾値を越えて異なる画素値はほぼ画素欠陥によりものであると考えて間違いないので、結果として欠陥画素の検出を極めて正確に実行することができるようになる。

【0025】なお、上記説明では、任意の1つの画素に対し、その左右に隣接あるいは近接した各1つずつ計2つの画素を用いて画素値の比較を行なうような場合について説明したが、これに限らず、任意の1つの画素に対し、その上下に隣接あるいは近接した各1つずつ計2つの画素を用いて、さらには上下左右に隣接あるいは近接した各1つずつ計4つの画素を用いて画素値の比較を行なう用にすることも考えられる。

【0026】なお、上述した図1及び図2を用いての説明はその基本的な概念について示したものであり、一部の白黒画像撮影用の撮像素子を除いて、実際の撮像素子は大抵カラーフィルタと一体にして構成されているため、任意の画素に対し、その画素に隣接する、色成分の異なる画素と画素値を比較しても意味がない。

【0027】そとで、図3により代表的な色成分配列であるベイヤー配列の原色系(RGB)のカラーフィルタを一体に構成した撮像素子について説明する。

【0028】図3(1)は原色系ベイヤー配列のカラーフィルタの配列内容を示すもので、図示する如く、縦2画素×横2画素の計4画素を1単位とし、RGBの各色成分中最も輝度成分に近いG(緑)を対角上に2画素配列し、残る相対する対角をR(赤)とB(青)各1画素で配列するものである。

画素 13 に示す如く、左右の1つあけて隣接する同一色 成分の各1ドットずつの画素値を用いて

(3) $rawdata[i] > rawdata[i+2] \times a$ (a t関値、1 < a < 2)

且つ

rawdata $[i] > rawdata [i-2] \times a$ が成立するか否か

rawdata[i] < rawdata[i+2]×b(bは **閾値、0 < b < 1)**

目つ

rawdata $[i] < rawdata [i-2] \times b$ が成立するか否か

なる比較演算を実行する。

【0031】但し、i=1または2である場合には、左 側に1つあけて隣接する同一色成分の画素がないため、 上記(3). (4) のいずれの式中においても rawd ata[i-2]に代えてrawdata[i+4]を

【0032】同様に、図中の画素Ⅰ4に示す如く、i= mまたはm-1である場合には、右側に1つあけて隣接 20 する同一色成分の画素がないため、上記(3), (4) のいずれの式中においてもrawdata[i+2]に 代えてrawdata[i-4]を用いる。

【0033】上記(3)式が成立した場合には場合には その画素iは他の画素に比べて輝度値が高すぎる、所謂 「白キズ」と判断され、反対に上記(4)式が成立した 場合にはその画素iは他の画素に比べて輝度値が低すぎ る、所謂「黒キズ」と判断されることになる。

【0034】上記のような画素iに関する画素値raw data[i]の判断を走査により画像データを構成す るすべての画素毎に判断していくもので、画像を構成す るすべての画素についての判断を行なうことにより、撮 像素子の欠陥を生じている画素を確実に検出することが できる。

【0035】次に本実施の形態の変形例を説明する。

【0036】図4(1)は原色系ベイヤー配列のカラー フィルタを一体に構成した撮像素子の撮像面を縦4×横 4の計16のブロックに均等に分割した状態を示すもの で、画像データにおいてもこの16分割した各ブロック それぞれで、予め各色成分毎に平均値を算出しておく。 【0037】図4(2)は上記図4(1)で示したよう に分割した画像データの複数のエリア中の一つを示すも ので、当該エリア内において、任意の画素に対して同一 の色成分を有する隣接画素は、左右共それぞれ1つずつ 画素をあけた2つ隣に位置するものとなる。

【0038】したがって、このp番目(1≦p≦16) のブロックエリア内の画像データが横mドット×縦nド ット(m, nは共に自然数)の画素値から構成されてい るものとし、任意の行j(1≦j≦n)において、その

a [i] とすると、両端の点 (i = 1 またはm) を除い て、基本的には図中の画素 15 に示す如く、左右の1つ あけて隣接する同一色成分の各1ドットずつの画素値を 用いて

(5) rawdata [i] > average(p, R) \times c 且つ、

rawdata [i] > rawdata [i+2]×a(aは閾値、1 <a<2)

か、または

10 rawdata $[i] > rawdata [i-2] \times a$ が成立するか否か(但し、average(p, R): 画素 i の 色成分Rに対応した、当該ブロックエリアp内の色成分 Rの全画素値の平均値。c:閾値、1 < c < 2)

(6) rawdata $[i] < average(p, R) \times d$

rawdata [i] < rawdata [i+2]×b(bは閾値、0 < b < 1)

か、または

rawdata $[i] < rawdata [i-2] \times b$

が成立するか否か

なる比較演算を実行する (画素 i の色成分がGまたはB であった場合には、上記average(p, R)に代え Taverage(p, G)またはaverage(p, B)を用いる)。

【0039】但し、i=1または2である場合には、当 該ブロックエリア内の左側に1つあけて隣接する同一色
 成分の画素がないため、上記(5), (6)のいずれの 式中においてもrawdata[i-2]に代えてra wdata[i+4]を用いる。

【0040】同様に、i=mまたはm-1である場合に は、当該ブロックエリア内の右側に1つあけて隣接する 同一色成分の画素がないため、上記(5), (6)のい ずれの式中においてもrawdata[i+2]に代え てrawdata[i-4]を用いる。

- 【0041】上記(5)式が成立した場合には場合には その画素 i は他の画素に比べて輝度値が高すぎる、所謂 「白キズ」と判断され、反対に上記(6)式が成立した 場合にはその画素iは他の画素に比べて輝度値が低すぎ る、所謂「黒キズ」と判断されることになる。

【0042】上記のような画素iに関する画素値raw data[i]の判断を走査により分割したブロックエ リア内の画像データを構成するすべての画素毎に判断し ていくもので、撮像素子の撮像面を画面の中央/周辺を 勘案して分割した複数のエリア毎に任意の画素をその画 素に隣接、近接する同一エリア内の同一色成分の複数の 対応画素の画素値と比較するようにしたので、欠陥画素 をより正確に検出することが可能となる。

【0043】なお、上記図4では撮像素子の撮像面を縦 4×横4の計16のブロックに均等に分割した場合につ 先頭から i (1 ≤ i ≤ m)列目の画素値を r a w d a t 50 いて例示したが、本発明はこれに限ることなく、例えば

7

図5 (1) に示すように単に画像を画面の中央部と周辺部の2つのエリアに分割するものとしてもよいし、あるいは図5 (2) に示すように縦3×横3の計9のブロックに均等に分割するものとしてもよく、さらには図5

(3) に示すように画面中央より同心的な大きさの異なる正方形により4つのエリアに分割するなど、光学レンズ系の特性や必要とされる比較演算の能力等に応じたエリア分割を行なうことで、より最適な結果を得ることができる。

【0044】その他、本発明は上記実施の形態に限らず、その要旨を逸脱しない範囲内で種々変形して実施することが可能であるものとする。

【0045】さらに、上記実施の形態には種々の段階の発明が含まれており、開示される複数の構成要件における適宜な組合わせにより種々の発明が抽出され得る。例えば、実施の形態に示される全構成要件からいくつかの構成要件が削除されても、発明が解決しようとする課題の欄で述べた課題の少なくとも1つが解決でき、発明の効果の欄で述べられている効果の少なくとも1つが得られる場合には、この構成要件が削除された構成が発明と 20して抽出され得る。

[0046]

【発明の効果】請求項1記載の発明によれば、任意の画素の出力値をその画素に近接する複数の対応画素の出力値と比較することで、周辺光量の低下をも考慮して正確に欠陥画素を検出することが可能となる。

*【0047】請求項2記載の発明によれば、上記請求項 1記載の発明の効果に加えて、撮像素子の撮像面を画面 の中央/周辺を勘案して分割した複数のエリア毎に任意 の画素をその画素に近接する同一エリア内の複数の対応 画素の出力値と比較するようにしたので、光学レンズ系 の特性や必要とされる比較演算の能力等に応じて最適な エリア分割を行なうことで、欠陥画素をより正確に検出 することが可能となる。

【0048】請求項3記載の発明によれば、上記請求項 0 1または2記載の発明の効果に加えて、カラーフィルタ を一体に形成した撮像素子であっても、同一の色成分毎 に欠陥画素の検出を行なうようになるため、欠陥画素を より正確に検出することが可能となる。

【図面の簡単な説明】

【図1】本実施の一形態に係る基本的な概念を示す図。

【図2】同実施の形態に係る画像を走査しながらの欠陥 画素検出の処理内容を示すフローチャート。

【図3】同実施の形態に係るカラーフィルタを一体に形成した撮像素子の欠陥画素検出の方法を示す図。

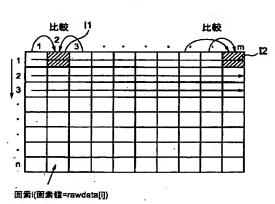
【図4】同実施の形態に係る変形例での欠陥画素検出の 方法を示す図。

【図5】等実施の形態に係る変形例での他のエリア分割 方法を例示する図。

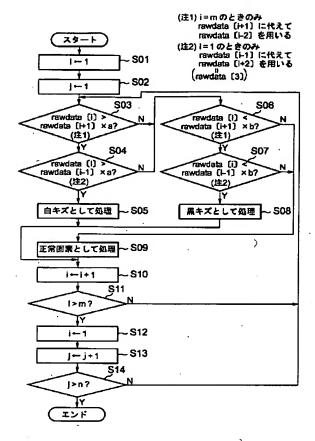
【符号の説明】

i, [1~ [6… 画素

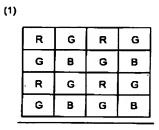
【図1】

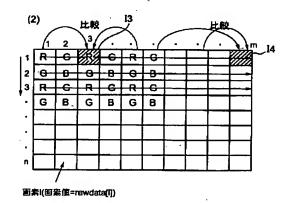


【図2】

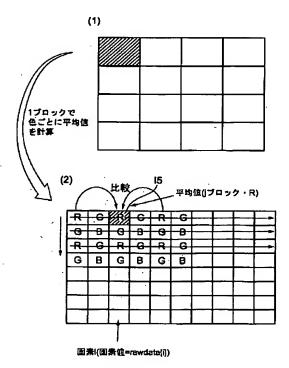


【図3】





【図4】



【図5】

